
VERTIGO

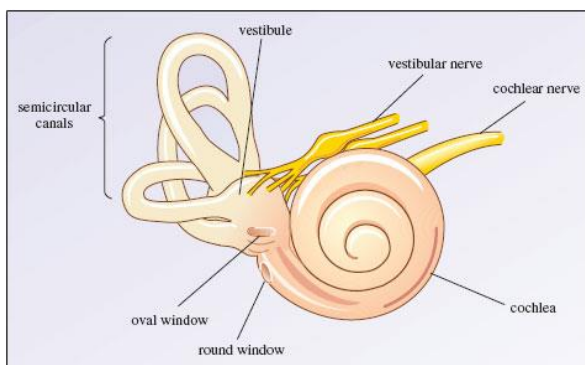
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, CARERS
AND DOCTORS



VERTIGO

Up to 40% of the population will experience dizziness in their lifetime sufficient that advice is sought from a relevant health professional. Vertigo is a sensation of the external environment rotating, leading to imbalance, nausea and at times vomiting. It is usually episodic, passing after a few minutes, and is distinct from “wooziness” or “light-headedness” which can arise from other metabolic factors (e.g. low blood pressure).

We have two sets of motion detectors (*semi-circular canals*) in our head that send signals to a central “computer”. When the signals are mismatched such as may be due to loss or damage of a motion detector, then a sensation of vertigo arises.



The motion detectors can be damaged by a large range of insults, inclusive of but not limited to, infection, trauma, stroke and medications. In the event of total loss of a motion detector on one side, within about 7 days central compensation takes place, such that the absent signal is substituted and symptoms decline. The central computer needs to see the mismatch in order for it to build the central compensation required, so inactivity usually leads to a longer recovery

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period. Vestibular exercises are demonstrated to be highly effective at improving rates of recovery but not all circumstances benefit from this treatment, such as with Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV).

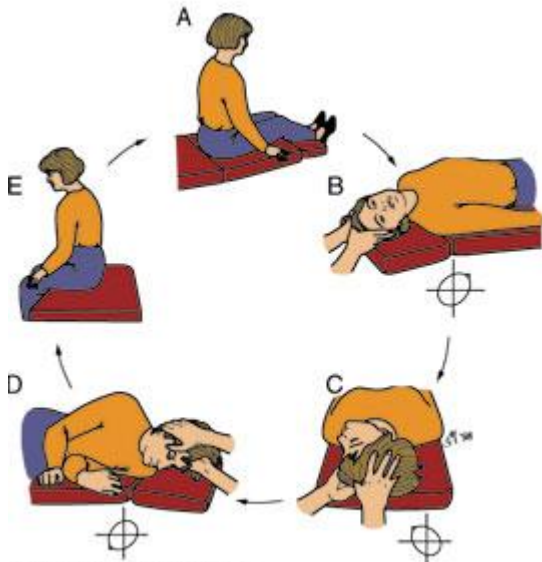
Medication can assist initially with acute symptoms but their use delays the natural central compensation processes.

The semicircular canals are responsible for the detection of rotary movement and it is these that are most commonly affected in acute episodes of vertigo. Examination of eye movement, looking for abnormal nystagmus, when gazing in particular directions is helpful in determining which semicircular canal has been affected. As the balance mechanism shares fluid, blood and nerve pathways with the cochlea then hearing examination necessarily forms part of a comprehensive balance assessment.

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo represents around 50% of vertiginous presentations. The primary causation is a displacement of tiny calcium carbonate crystals used in the balance system to aid detection of movement via their physical mass. These crystals, when misplaced, can be shifted from the posterior canal into a non-disruptive area of the balance mechanism using the Epley manoeuvre. In 80% of cases one treatment is sufficient to successfully treat BPPV.

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Vestibular Neuritis arises from an infection damaging the vestibular nerve leading to vertigo and loss of balance. This diagnosis does not benefit from Epley manoeuvres and vestibular rehabilitation is the most effective course forward.

Menieres disease is an episodic vertigo associated with roaring tinnitus and low frequency hearing loss. The duration of vertigo can range from minutes to hours and arises from excess fluid in the inner ear; much like glaucoma is to the eye. In between attacks the individual is usually trouble free of vertiginous symptoms

Further Information:

Whirled Foundation – Support for Chronic Imbalance Sufferers.

A: Suite 4, Brookwood House 424-426 Nepean Highway FRANKSTON VIC 3199

T: 03 9783 9233 or 1300 368 818 E: micky@whirledfoundation.org
<http://www.chronicillness.org.au/peer-support-network/members-directory/menieres-australia/>

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The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital

Fact Sheets: Meniere's Syndrome

https://www.eyeandear.org.au/page/Patients/Patient_information/Balance_Disorders/What_are_some_types_of_balance_disorders/Mnires_disease/

Better Health Channel

Fact Sheets: Vertigo

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/dizziness-and-vertigo>

Vestibular Disorders Association (VEDA – Life Rebalanced) US

Patient Information Page: <https://vestibular.org/menieres-disease>

Meniere's Society – for dizziness and balance disorders (UK)

Patient Information Page: <https://www.menieres.org.uk/information-and-support/symptoms-and-conditions/menieres-disease>

Meniere's Disease Society of Western Australia

Patient Contact: <https://www.menieres.org.au/counselling/>

Meniere's Information and Resource Centre

T: 1300 368 818 or (03) 9783 9233

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Suite 4, Brockwood House, 424-426 Nepean Hwy
Frankston, Victoria 3199, Australia

Health Direct: Vertigo

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/vertigo>

Concerns or Questions

Please feel free to contact ACE Audiology